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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 INR-05

CIAE-00 L-01 IO-03 SCCT-01 SY-02 PRS-01 /041 W
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P 192102Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6395

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 4716

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, PFOR, PINT, AR
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON INTERIOR MINISTER

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (☒) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

FROM AMBASSADOR HILL (APPROVED BY HIM FOR TRANSMISSION PRIOR
TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR US ON JULY 18)

1. ON JULY 15 ACCOMPANIED BY THE LEGAL ATTACHE I CALLED ON MIN
OF INTERIOR HARGUINDEGUY. THE PURPOSE OF MY CALL WAS TO AGAIN
IMPRESS UPON THE MINISTER THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE QUESTION OF
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. RATHER THAN RAISE THE QUESTION DIRECTLY,
I REFERRED TO POSSIBLE SECURITY RISKS TO A LARGE MEDICAL
CONVENTION WHICH IS TO BE HELD HERE IN 1977 AS A MEANS OF LEADING
INTO THE SUBJECT OF TERRORISM IN ARGENTINA.

2. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION, THE MIN SAID THAT GOA HAS SCORED
IMPORTANT SUCCESSES AGAINST TERRORISTS AND THAT BY MARCH OF
NEXT YEAR THE TERRORIST PROBLEM WILL BE BEHIND US. HOWEVER,
HE SAID, HE EXPECTED SERIOUS TROUBLE BETWEEN NOW AND THE FIRST
OF SEPTEMBER. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE MONTONEROS AND THE
ERP ARE COMING TOGETHER AS ONE TERRORIST GROUP AND THEY ARE
VERY WELL ARMED. HE INDICATED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE ERP
REPORTEDLY HAS SOME 5,000 SOPHISTICATED INCENDIARY DEVICES
PURCHASED IN GERMANY IN 1973 (WHICH, HOWEVER, MAY NOW BE TOO
OLD TO BE EFFECTIVE). THE MINISTER FELT THAT THE WEEKS JUST
BEFORE AND AFTER "TRELEW DAY", AUGUST 22, WOULD BE THE MOST

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MOST DANGEROUS PERIOD.

3. THE MINISTER SAID HE WAS IN CONTROL OF THE SECURITY FORCES, AND THE NEW POLICE CHIEF GENERAL OJEDA IS HIS MAN. HE REMARKED, HOWEVER, THAT THE EMBASSY MUST UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS HARD TO CONTROL ALL UNITS OF THE POLICE AND MILITARY, AND THAT ACTIONS SUCH AS THE KILLING OF THE PRIESTS COULD HAPPEN.

4. I POINTED OUT THAT WHILE THIS MIGHT BE SO, THE DEATHS OF THE PRIESTS AND OF ANTHONY PUENTE (SON OF A LONG TIME EMBASSY EMPLOYEE) ARE VERY HARD TO EXPLAIN IN THE US.

5. THE MINISTER DID NOT TAKE ME UP ON THESE INCIDENTS; RATHER, HE CHANGED THE SUBJECT BY REFERRING TO A RECENT BARRONS' ARTICLE COMPARING BEIRUT WITH BUENOS AIRES. HE SAID THIS WAS VERY UNFAIR, AND NOTED THAT AMB MUSICH HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO INVITE TWO OR THREE BARRONS' REPORTERS TO BUENOS AIRES TO TAKE A LOOK FOR THEMSELVES.

6. IN CONCLUDING THE DISCUSSION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION, THE MINISTER ASSURED ME THAT ERP AND MONTONERO LEADERS, SANTUCHO AND FIRMENICH RESPECTIVELY, ARE IN ARGENTINA AND THAT THE GOA IS BENDING ALL EFFORTS TO APPREHEND THEM.

7. COMMENT: IN MY CONTACTS WITH THE MINISTER THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD GIVE AND TAKE. ON THIS OCCASION, I BELIEVE HE APPRECIATED MY EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION TO HIM FOR THE ROLE HE PLAYED IN EXPELLING THE THREE DRUG TRAFFICKERS TO THE US. I AM POSITIVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE UP ITS MIND TO USE ALL MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL TO ELIMINATE THE TERRORISTS ONCE AND FOR ALL, BUT THOSE IN GOVERNMENT ARE LIKELY TO TURN A DEAF EAR TO ADVICE FROM ABROAD ON THE TOPIC. RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THE GOVERNMENT IS CONVINCED THAT IT IS THREATENED BY A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER AND THEREFORE MUST DEFEAT THE TERRORISTS AT ALL COSTS.

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